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THE WORK OF JOHN H. TWACHTMAN

The exhibition in the spring of a number of canvases by the late John H. Twachtman, at the American Art Galleries, New York, was an event of unusual interest to those watching the development of landscape art, and suggests some consideration of Mr. Twachtman's contribution to that art. Like all men of great and spontaneous talent Mr. Twachtman was uneven in his work. Perhaps in his case the distance between high and low tide was exceptionally great, for much of his work was far from being representative of either his abilities or his possibilities. Happily, however, it is only in his best that the artist lives.

His color sense was rare and delicate, his harmonic instinct invariable, and his note strongly individual; and though acutely sensitive to all the varying moods of nature, his preference seemed to be for the subject and moment that offered the most subtle differences in color and value.

In self-expression he was essentially the painter. His argument was inevitably with the brush. Through the medium of words the analysis of his theories and convictions never came so readily, in spite of the fact that, like many other painters of the highest degree of talent, life had forced him to waste much of his time and spirit in teaching. To waste—with reference to the lost hours and opportunities of his own life; the students who were given the privilege of coming in contact with his art, thought, and personality had all the gain.

Mr. Twachtman confined himself almost entirely to landscape and to figures in the open air. In all his later work his motives were with few exceptions selected from the neighborhood of his own home in Greenwich and at East Gloucester. Among the pictures in this last collection were a number of small impressions painted upon panels made from the lids of cigar-boxes which he had himself prepared for the purpose. These were all East Gloucester subjects, and though seldom representing more than an hour's work, were among the most notable things in the exhibition. Although small in size they had the value of large canvases and had unusual distinction in both composition and treatment. They were quiet patches of Gloucester harbor, with delightfully placed "spots" of trees and roof-tops; weather-stained groups of fish-sheds and wharves; the tall, sun-bleached piles, sea-greened at the base, with their moving reflections in the water; the coming, going, or waiting ships, perhaps with spread sails drying in the sun after a storm. Works strictly correct and thoroughly pleasing.

The poetry of all these things appealed to him strongly in spite

of his insistence upon the pre-eminence of the decorative. I say "in spite of," because, although the two qualities should not be incompatible, the majority of painters who emphasize the decorative tend to disregard the element of sentiment. Few painters have felt so finely with the brush the movement, ripple, and reflection in water. He was especially fond of white in sunlight and left many impressions of white houses among green trees, mist-like, dream-like, the emotion



THE CHRISTENING
By José Jimenez y Aranda

of the effect, never the exact reproduction of it. He himself received strong impressions, and these he sought ever to record on canvas.

His own house, designed by himself—one might better say composed by himself—to fit the hillside upon which it stood, was one of his favorite motives; he has left studies of it in many aspects—imprisoned summer memories of white pillars cross-barred with sunlight, patterned with leaf shadows, of warm light and cool shade over the grass. His interpretation of snow effects was particularly sympathetic. In this posthumous exhibition there was one canvas with a foreground of piazza and the irregular lines of a frozen vine, snow-touched, that was as indefinable yet deep in its appeal as a Chopin nocturne or a Paul Verlaine verse, a picture one could never forget.

Another small canvas of green downs and a sandy road was of

peculiar interest. Every painter knows the difficulty—impossibility, almost—of making a harmonious arrangement of outdoor blue and green in full sunlight. Certain effects of fresh green, very beautiful in nature, are undesirable as painting material. In the canvas in question the effect was rich, harmonious, and truthful—truthful as an impression of the effect, the spirit of the scene not the letter—and it may well be argued from the standpoints of other arts than the painter's



THE HOLY FRANCISCUS OF ASSISI

By José Gurneo y Alda

that it is invariably the spirit not the letter that is truth. A second look at this canvas would reveal the fact that the sky was green also—the technical cause of the resultant harmony—a performance sure to meet with unfavorable criticism from those of different artistic convictions.

It is an accepted principle in art, however, that it is the manner of doing that is the thing—as Berlioz said, regarding the judgment of musical composition, “Whatever produces a good effect is good, and whatever produces a bad effect is bad.” Beyond the point that sets the accepted standard, these things become a matter of individual appeal. Nothing more expressive of Mr. Twachtman's art attitude than this little canvas could be imagined. It is a pictorial lecture.

Mr. Twachtman's professional standing among his associates, and

especially among the group to which he attached himself, was very high, and what is more, his position was unique. His death deprived American art of a striking personality. Yet it is impossible not to feel that much of his achievement, judged by the standard of his best, fell far short of his vision. What he might have done if he could have lived must remain one of the unsolved mysteries of art and life. In regarding those lives in which in this world the art impulse has been bruised, retarded, or denied its full expansion, the conviction comes that sometime, somewhere, it will find complete expression.

KATHARINE METCALF ROOF.



MODERN ITALIAN ART

Modern Italian art is not degenerate; it does not fall far behind the best work of the Renaissance. But between the art of the period prior to 1830 and that of the years following 1870, a distinction is to be drawn. In those forty years Italy was struggling for her independence, and not till the fall of the temporal power was there any great prosperity.

In the work of architecture in the large cities, men were hampered by tradition and by the presence of ancient monuments. A large part of the work actually accomplished has been in the way of restoration. Still there have been some very creditable achievements. Milan, the richest city in Italy, leads in art matters. Here the lawyer-architect, Cagnolo, erected an arch of peace in 1838, based on the models of Constantine and Severus, but more elegant than its prototypes.

Another monument of the genius of the Milanese is the great cathedral. Unfinished as to its façade in the sixteenth century, the architects of that period erected the first and second stories, which are classic and belong to the Renaissance period. In the seventeenth century an architect added the Gothic buttresses, reaching to the top of the second story, and in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, men worked on the façade. It is the work of many hands and many periods. Consequently it is hybrid in character. The taste of the present day demands a more perfect unity and the plan is to remove everything that is Renaissance and have a front which shall be entirely Gothic. The gallery of Vittorio Emanuele and the restored castle are also fine examples of Milanese art.

In Rome the architects were still hampered by the presence of old monuments, and very little has been done that is original. In 1823 St. Paul's Without the Walls was burned and the work since done is more than a restoration of the old basilica. The transept was changed; chapels were added; altars and mosaics brought in. Eighty mono-